MANKIND IN PERIL

Selections from the writings and speeches

of

MAULANA SYED ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI
(Rector, Dar-ul-Uloom, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow)

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FOREWORD

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi is very widely known throughout the length and breadth of the Muslim World, as a renowned thinker and as an erudite scholar of an enlightened spirit. By his scholarly writings and soul stirring speeches he has made a valuable contribution to the cause of Islamic Dawah. The deep research and lucidity of style displayed in his writings are marked with a sense of vivid spiritual lustre and light. He is a keen student of history with a sense of destiny and a very high literary taste - traits that are prominently displayed in writings and speeches.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi never fails to bring home to the Muslim Ummah the devastating consequences of the impact of soul-ridden, materialistic thought, culture and civilization of the West on the Muslim Ummah, and the urgent need to meet this challenge, from the fountain-head of Islamic spiritual and historical tradition, which had successfully encountered the challenges of anti-Islamic

forces in the various phases of its history. One who reads the writings of the Maulana never fails to observe the emphasis he lays on the need to fulfil not only the intellectual needs of the mind (aql). but also the emotional yearnings of the heart (qalb). This integrated approach of the Maulana to men and matters, is a salient feature noticeable in his contributions, which is a rare phenomenon among most of our contemporary writers.

The Naleemiah Bureau of Islamic Publications feels privileged to bring out a publication consisting of four of his contributions, selected from his numerous writings and speeches, in commemoration of his historic visit to Sri Lanka to grace the first Convocation of the Jamiah Naleemiah.

This publication consists of the following articles and speeches :

1. THE NEW MENACE AND ITS ANSWER - an English rendering of the Arabic work entitled "Ridda, wa la Ababakr Laha" originally published by Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Nadwa, Lucknow.

2. ISLAM IN A CHANGING WORLD - Inaugural Address delivered at the Seminar on "Islam in a Changing World" held in January, 1977 under the auspices of the Department of Islamic Studies, Muslim University, Aligarh. This English render-

ring of lecture in Urdu was originally published by Islamic Research Academy, Nadwa, Lucknow.

3. THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT HAD AMERICA BEEN BLESSED WITH ISLAM - This speech was delivered on June 6th 1977, in Harvard University, and was translated from Urdu to English by Muhammad Asif Kidwai M.A.PhD. and published by Islamic research Academy, Nadwa, Lucknow,

4. THE PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO ACQUIRE IT - Speech delivered on receiving the Degree of D. Litt. (Honoris Causa) at the Seventh Convocation of the University of Kashmir held on October 29, 1981. This was traslated from Urdu into English by Mohamed Asif Kidwai, M. A., Ph. D. and published by Islamic Research Academy, Nadwa, Lucknow.

We are thankful to Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and to the Academy of Islamic Research, Lucknow for granting us permission to reproduce these articles.

Dr. M. A. M. Shukri
Director
Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies

MAULANA SYED ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI

A PROFILE

Scion of an illustrious family which has produced a number of defenders of faith and spiritual preceptors like Shah Alamullah Naqshbandi, and Syed Ahmad Shaheed who founded the greatest reformatory movement in Islam known to Indian History, Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali's forefathers also gained recognition as men of letters. His father, Maulana Hakim Syed Abdul Hai, was an eminent scholar of his time who had listed in his encyclopaedic work, entitled ***Nazhatul Khawatir***, (in eight volumes) about 5000 biographical notices of Muslim scholars, theologians, jurists, etc., of India. His other notable works were *Al-Thaqafat Al Islamia-fil-Hind* (Islamic Cultural Attainments in India, published by Islamic Academy of Letters, Damascus), *Al-Hind fil 'Ahd ul-Islami* (India during Muslim Rule) and *Gul-i-R'ana* (A History of Urdu Poetry).

Syed Abul Hassan Ali was born in 1333 A.H., (1914 A.D.). His father, Syed Abdul Hai, bade farewell to the fleeting world when Syed Abul Hassan Ali was only nine years of age. The responsibility of his education and guidance, thus, devolved on his elder brother, Dr. Syed Aboul Ali Hasani who had a medical practice at Lucknow. The young Syed Abul Hassan Ali began his educational career at Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. He pursued his studies in Arabic literature under Sheikh Khalil ibn Muhammad of Yemen and Dr. Sheikh Taqiu ddin al-Hilali of Morocco, and in *Tafsir* (Exegesis of the Quran) under Maulana Ahmad Ali of Lahore. Besides his extensive study of religious sciences, the Maulana showed keen interest in Islamic history and also learnt English which helped him to keep himself abreast of contemporary thought and events. He began his career at the Nadwatul Ulama as a teacher of Arabic literature and *Tafsir* and continued to lecture on these subjects for ten years.

After the demise of his father and his elder brother, both of whom had held the office of the Secretaryship of Nadwatul Ulama, this responsibility was entrusted to the care of Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi along with the work relating to the academic supervision of the Darul Uloom. In addition to these, he is the President of the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow. The Maulana is associated in one capacity or the other with numerous other religious, literary and cultural organisations within India and abroad. He is the Chairman of the Managing Committee of Darul Musannifin (Shibli Academy), Azamgarh,

President of Dini Talimi Council, Uttar Pradesh, and member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus, and of the Higher Council of the Medina University, Medina, Founder-member of Rabita-Alam-el-Islami, (World Islamic League) Mecca, Member, Executive Committee of the Islamic Universities Federation, Rabat, Morocco, and of the Academy of Arabic Language, Amman, Jordan. The Maulana has, also, been the visiting professor of the Damascus and Medina Universities. He is the first Indian writer who has the distinction of his works being prescribed as a course of study in a number of Arab Universities. He has extensively toured the Islamic World as well as European and American continents. During the course of these excursions, he has delivered several lectures in the Universities of the Arab countries and also in the British, German and American Universities which have since been published and are highly appreciated. He was awarded Shah Faisel Award for his services to the cause of Islam in 1980 by the Faisel Award Committee consisting of distinguished scholars drawn from all over the Islamic world.

The Maulana is a gifted speaker in Arabic and Urdu and has a felicity of pen in both these languages. He began his literary career at the age of 17 years with an Arabic work on Syed Ahmad Shaheed which was brought out by Allama S. Rashid Riza, Editor of *Al-Minar*, Egypt. It was followed by *Seerat Syed Ahmad Shaheed* (Urdu), written in 1939-40 while his notable Arabic work *Maza Khasara ul'Alam b'Inhitat-el-Muslimeen* was not only widely acclaimed but also

carved out a place for him in the literary circles of the Arab world. This book as well as several others of his works have since seen more than a dozen reprints and have also been translated into English, Turkish, Bhasha Indonesia, Persian, Tmail and some other languages. Besides numerous essays and lectures published in the shape of brochures, he has written about fifty books some of which are listed below:—

1. Islam and the World, (English version of "Maza Khasara al-Alam—" also translated into Urdu Persian and Turkish).

2. Seerat Syed Ahmad Shaheed (Urdu—two vols)

3. Western Civilization, Islam and Muslims (English), also in Arabic, Urdu and Turkish.

4. The Four Pillars of Islam (English)—(rendered into Urdu, Arabic and Turkish). Urdu version is called "Arkan-e-Araba".

5. Pathway to Medina (English)—(Arabic and Urdu also).

6. Religion and Civilization (English)—also Urdu and Arabic versions.

7. Glory of Iqbal (English)—Arabic and Urdu versions also.

8. Faith Versus Materialism (English)—in Arabic and Urdu too.

9. The Musalman (English)—Urdu version also.

10. Muslims in India (English)—Arabic and Urdu versions also.

11. Saviours of Islamic Spirit (English—three volumes), Urdu version "Tarikh Dawat-o-Azimat" in four volumes and Arabic version in two volumes.

12. Speaking Plainly to the West, (English)—Arabic and Urdu also.

13. From the Depth of the Heart in America (English)—Nai Duniya se Saf Saf Baten—(Urdu)

14. Darya-e-Kabul se Darya-e-Yarmuk tak (Urdu) —Arabic also (A Travel account of the Middle East).

15. Purane Chiragh (Urdu) in two volumes. (Life sketches of contemporary personalities).

16. Islamic Concept of Prophethood (English, Arabic and Urdu).

17. Al-Arab wal Islam—(Arabic).

18. Muhammad Rasulullah (English)—As-Sirat-un-Nabawiya (Arabic). Nabi-i-Rahmat (Urdu).

19. Appreciation and Interpretation of Religion in Modern Age (English), Asre Hazir Men Din K Tafhim-o-Tashrih—(Urdu).

THE NEW MENACE AND ITS ANSWER

Islam has experienced many an Apostatic upsurge during the course of its history. The most powerful of them was the one that manifested itself among the Arab tribes soon after the death of the Prophet. By this we mean the mighty rebellious movement that was nipped in the bud by Caliph Abu Bakr through his matchless courage and strength of will. Then, again, the second great onslaught of Apostasy within Islam was the wide spread swing towards Christianity at the expulsion of Muslims from Spain which had stolen into some other countries too that were then under the domination of the Western Christian Powers, with the active support and encouragement of the Christian missionaries. Apart from these well-known episodes, there are also some stray instances like that of a few faint-hearted Muslims going over to some other faith in India. But

such cases have been very rare, and the fact is that with the exception of the large-scale conversion of Muslims to Christianity in Spain, if it can be described as an Apostatic Movement, the general opinion of the historians of Islam is that the Muslim Millet has never seriously had to encounter a general threat of Apostasy.

Whenever an incident of this nature took place in Islam it always produced a two-fold reaction with the Muslim society: (1) intense resentment and anger against the erring party, and (2) the termination of social relations. Anyone who had the misfortune to renounce the faith was the subject of unqualified contempt and resentment from among the Muslims and he automatically ceased to be a member of the Islamic society in which he had been born and brought up. All contacts and relationship between an Apostate and his kinsmen became non-existent immediately. The walking over from the fold of Islam into that of another faith meant indeed the walking over from one world into another. The entire family of the Apostate would turn its face against him. Now neither the kinship remained nor the bond of marriage nor brotherhood nor inheritance. A wave of Apostasy would produce international repercussions and arouse at once the self-protective instincts of Islam and the Muslims. The intellectuals, religious leaders and preachers of the Islamic country where such a thing occured would get arrayed as a united whole against the calamity. They would probe in to its causes and draw pointed attention to the virtues and the superior merit of Islam. A current of agony and disgust would run through the entire body of the Muslim society

that was immediately concerned with it and shake it up at all levels. The elite as well as the common people would make it their one thought and concern. Such was the way in which the incidents of Apostasy would react upon the consciousness of Muslims although these were neither widespread nor of much consequence in life.

Now, however, the Islamic World has been confronted for sometime with a threat of Apostasy which is casting its shadow over it from end to end. In its dimensions and vigour it has superseded by far all the previous threats. No country is safe from its sinister influence. But country is a far cry. There are, in fact, very few families which can claim to have been left unaffected by it. This is an Apostasy that has come into the Muslim East in the wake of the political domination by the West, and it has posed the most serious challenge to Islam since the days of the Prophet.

What does 'Apostasy' mean in Islamic terminology? The exchanging of one faith, of one spiritual creed for another;the refutation of the teachings the Prophet had brought into the world, the rejection of the ideals and precepts that have been continuously attributed to him and are accepted in Islam positively as truths. And what course did an Apostate adopt? He denied the Divine Apostleship of Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him and his Companions) and adopted the creeds of Christianity, Judaism or Hinduism or became an authiest and rejected Prophesy, Revelation and the concept of the Hereafter. This was the sense in which the people of the former times understood the term of

'Apostasy'. Anyone who abandoned his faith took the way of the Church if he adopted Christianity and of the temple if he accepted Hinduism, and so on. His Apostatic deed would be there for everyone to see; there would be no concealment of it. Fingers would be raised at him and the Muslims would cease to associate any hopes with that person. In brief, the Apostasy of anyone was not hidden from the public view.

Europe introduced into the East concepts and ideologies that were based on the repudiation of the fundamentals of spiritual belief and the rejection of an Omnipotent Power holding sway over the entire universe, of that Supreme Consciousness which brought the world into creation and in whose hands lay the dispensation of it (*Beware! It is He who doth create and it is He alone who rules*); concepts which had their origin in the denial of the Unknown, the Supernatural, Divine Revelation, Apostleship and the transcendental values—this was the common feature of all the branches of thought brought by the West no matter whether they dealt with biology and evolution or with ethics, psychology, politics or economics. However varied their field of study they all had as their meeting ground the materialistic approach to man and his world and the interpretation of the phenomena along materialistic lines.

These ideals and concepts invaded the East and penetrated deep into the inner recesses of its soul. This Western materialistic philosophy was undoubtedly the greatest religion preached in the world after Islam. It was the greatest religion from the point of view of the

extensiveness of its scope, the profoundest religion from the point of view of the depth to which its roots went and the strongest religion from the point of view of the capacity it possessed for conquering the hearts and minds of men. The educated and intelligent section in the Muslim countries was simply bewitched by it: it delightfully drank it in and assimilated it eagerly. It became a follower of the new faith almost in the same way as a Muslim follows Islam or a Christian follows Christianity, to the extent that it now adores it with all its heart, reveres its ideals and swears by the greatness of its founders and torchbearers. It propagates its teachings, denounces the creed that may run counter to it and forges links of brotherhood and fraternity with the other followers of the new faith. Thus, this new faith had become a sort of international family.

THE RELIGION IRRELIGIOUSNESS

What, then, this new faith is—however shy its protagonists may feel in giving it the name of a faith? It consists of, as we have said earlier, the rejection of that All-Knowing, Well-Informed Being who is the Creator of the Worlds, the Owner of Destiny and the Architect of Life, of Futurity, the Last Day, the Heaven the Hell, Divine Reward and Punishment, Prophecy and Apostleship and the Holy Law, of the truth that God has ordained for all mankind the obedience to the Holy Prophet and made all salvation and enlightenment dependent on that loyalty, of the principle that Islam is that final and eternal message from the Divine which enfolds all that is good in this world and the next and

embodies a programme of life which is higher and superior to every other system, and of the fact that the world has been created for man and man for God.

The ruling classes of Muslim States everywhere today are generally the followers of this new creed, although they may notall be belonging to the same category so far as ardency and the strength of spiritual allegiance are concerned. There is no doubt that in these classes are found individuals who bear faith in God and are believers in Islam but the dominant feature of them all is alas! nothing elese but materialism and the Western philosophy of life that are rooted in atheism.

I say again that it is this Apostasy which is nowadays engulfing the Islamic World from one end to another. It has made its onslaught from house to house, family to family. The schools' the college, the Universities have all been overrun by it. There will hardly be a family fortunate enough not to include a follower of this cre d among its members, Approach any Mnslim family, talk to its members in confidence, question, scratch them under the surface and you are sure to find someone who will not be believing in God or the Quran as a Divine, eternal message and a complete code of life. Or, he will just say that he has given no thought to these questions because he does not attach any great importance to them. And his will be a lucky case.

This, indeed, is apostasy but it has managed to evade the notice of the Muslims. The reason is that its victim does not go to the church or the synagogue, nor does he proclaim his conversion. The society, consequently remains blissfully blind to it. It does not take exception to the Apostate. It nither criticises him nor punishes him nor does it enforce the other social sanctions. The Apostate retains his place and rights in the society and even gets a chance to dominate it.

It is here that the most vital issue confronting the Muslim World lies. It is an issue that affects the entire Islamic Millet. A fast spreading Apostatic wave is sweeping over the Muslims society and yet no one cares. Even theUlema and the religious leaders feel no anxiety about it. In the past when a critical question faced the theologians they used to cry out in desperation, "An issue and no Abul Hasan! (That is, an issue of vital importance to the Millet has cropped up and there is no one with the wisdom of Hazrat Ali to solve it)." Now I say, "An issue and no Abu Bakr! (Apostasy is consuming the Muslim Millet like wild fire and there is no one with the faith and fortitude of Hazrat Abu Bakr to put it down)."

But remember that war is no solution of the problem, nor will it be wise to inflame public opinion over it. The problem cannot be solved by anger or by the use of force. Islam is not acquainted with the holy Inquisition. It also does not allow for vindictiveness and violence. The matter calls for patience, perseverence, sagacity and

resolution. We will need immense study, thought and wisdom to deal with it successfully.

THE SECRET OF THE WORLD-WIDE SUCCESS OF IRRELIGIOUSNESS

But how did this new faith infiltrate into the Islamic World? How did it come to acquire the strength to engulf the Muslims within their homes; What can explain the mightly hold it enjoys over the hearts and minds of men? All these questions require careful examination.

In the 19th Century Islam had begun to show signs of fatigue and decay. In matters of faith, religious endeavour, knowledge and learning it had indeed touched the lowest point. Islam, in fact, knows no old age and no decline. Like the sun, it is ever young, ever new. It was Muslims who had fallen a prey to senility and degeneration. They had become narrow of outlook, their thinking had become stereotyped—it had lost originality—their minds had grown fossilised, they had lost enthusiasm for religion, and—exceptions apart—the ability to present it in an effective manner.

In addition to this, no attempt was made to establish contact with the young educated classes and to influence their minds although the future belonged to them. It occured to no one to impress upon them the basic truths that Islam was an eternal, evergreen faith, the faith of humanity, that the Quran was a miracle of a Book, permanent, unchanging, deathless, whose wonders knew

no limit and treasures were boundless, that the Holy Prophet was the prophet for all times and the leader of all men, that the Islamic Shariat was a marvel of legislation, endued with the ability to march hand in hand with life and answer all the demands it may make upon jurisprudence. Faith and morality and the spiritual values were the only foundations on which a civilised, enlightened society could be built. The modern civilisation had only the means and the channels. The ends and the real springheads were contained in the teachings of the Prophets. And a healthy and balanced system of civilisation could come into being only when there was a harmony between the ends and the means.

This was the time and the situation when the West made its assault on the Islamic World with its whole armoury of thoughts and ideas that had been designed and hammered into shape in the minds of the foremost thinkers and philosophers of their time and garbed in such philosophical phraseology that they gave the impression of being the very essence of human wisdom and learning, although quite a good deal in them were purely empirical and had no basis in fact. The Western thinkers had taken a lot for granted and drawn conclusions that were in a measure just hypothetical. The systems of thought they had built up were an amalgamation of fact and fiction, of knowledge and ignorance and of firm reality and poetic imagination—yes, poetry for you must not imagine that poetry is confined only to verse and rhyme; it is practised also in the realms of philosophy and social sciences.

These ideologies came under the shadow of the political conquest by the West, and the people of the East bowed down before them emotionally and intelectually too. The eastern intellectuals welcomed them with open arms. Some of them of course accepted them intelligently and consciously, but their number was few. With the majority it was a case of unthinking acceptance, dazzeld as they were by the material superiority of the alien rulers. They saw and they surrendered. Their minds were hypnotised and belief in the Western ideas became synonymous with progress and enlightenment and the most important criterion of learning and wisdom.

Thus it was that this new Apostasy spread its wings over Muslim East without hitch or opposition. Neither the father objected to the downfall of the son nor the teacher to that of the student. The religious leaders also felt no qualms about it. It was a silent revolution. The Apostates did not wend their way to any church or temple: they did not prostrate themselves before any idol nor made sacrificial offerings at any polytheistic altar—signs which in the past gave an indication of the spiritual metamorphosis.

The apostates of old used to walk openly out of the Muslim society and associate themselves freely with the society of those whose religion they had accepted. They used to declare boldly their change of faith and submit cheerfully to what they had to bear as a result of it. They did not insist upon clinging to the benefits accruing from membership of the society they had in

fact forsaken. But the present-day Apostates who turn their backs on Islam do not at the same time also walk out of the Islamic society inspite of the fact that of all societies it is only Islamic society which is based entirely on spiritual belief since it cannot come into being without the presence of a particular set of religious doctrines These modern Apostates continue to avail themselves of all the possible advantages of being the members of the Islamic society. This is a unique situation for Islam.

As they have turned and twisted the moral and spiritual values so also have these ideologies sown the seeds or Paganish sentiments and feelings in the Muslim world upon which Islam has declared an open war. For instance, take Paganish factionalism which is founded in race, county and nation. It is being venerated with fanatical enthusiasm and reverence. The human family is cut into pieces in its name. It has been raised to the status of a religion and given a complete control over people's thoughts and emotions. It is indeed the most powerful rival to religion judged by the extensiveness and the intensity of its influence. It gains ascendancy over one's entire existence. When it sweeps over a society it pushes the work of the Propehts into oblivion and reduces religion into a soulless programme of rituals and ceremonies, the organic unity of mankind about which God had declared, "Lo! this your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me" is destroyed and the human race is divided into a number of warring camps.

WHY IS ISLAM OPPOSED TO FACTIONALISM?

Islam had dealt a deadly blow to this spirit and administered a clear warning to its followers against the dangerous possibilities it contained. Factionalism is the very antonym of a universal faith since the basic oneness of humanity cannot endure even for a brief while in its presence. The negation of factionalism is an undisputed feature of the Islamic Shariat. There are innumerable provisions to this effect in it. Anyone who has an awareness of the inner nature of Islam—in truth, of religion—will have no hesitation in realising the truth of the assertion that religion can have nothing to do with racial or national prejudices. It is beyond dispute that a majority of the ills that are poisoning the world-atmosphere today and dragging humanity to the verge of destruction are the direct results of national factionalism. Naturally, therefore, a man who had come to the world only to weld mankind into one whole, to bring it under the banner of a single faith, to call into existence a new society based on the consciousness of God Almighty, the Nourisher of the Worlds, and to give it peace in place of war, love in place of hatred, unity in place of division could not but wage a relentless war against it till it became a thing of the past.

WAVE OF NATIONALISM IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

But thanks to the political and cultural domination of the West, the Islamic World which owes its very existence to the Prophet has now wholeheartedly adopted

the creed of Nationalism as if it is a proved scientific truth from which there can be no escape. Almost all the different peoples who go to make the family of Islam are today the ardent admirers of factional prejudices which their religion had unceremoniously buried. They are doing their best to revive them including even those Paganish national practices which are openly amounting to idolatory. Among some of them the pre-Islamic era of their history which Islam emphatically condemns as Paganish and steeped in Ignorance is being recalled as a thing of pride—and Paganism is a word nothing more detestable than which exists in the eyes of Islam. The Quran declares the deliverance of Muslims from it as one of the choicest favours of God and calls upon them to be duly greateful to Him for that:

And remember Allah's favour unto you. How ye were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye became as brothers by His grace; and (how) ye were upon the brink of an abyss of fire.

(2:103)

Nay, but Allah doth confer a favour on you, in as much as He hath led you to the faith, if ye are earnest.

(49: 17)

He it is who sendeth down clear revelations unto His slave, that He may bring you forth from darkness unto light; and lo! for you, Allah is full of pity, merciful. (57: 9)

Such being the case, a Muslim should be filled with repugnance and disgust at the sight of Paganism—whether modern or ancient. Have you ever seen a person released from prison not to look back at the period of his imprisonment with anguish and displeasure of a man having been cured of a foul disease not to shudder at the thought of his illness? Or has there ever been a man who has not thanked God at the dawn of the day after having experienced a terrible nightmare during the night? Why, then, should it be different with Paganism which is many times worse than a term in prison or an illness or a nightmare? Why should a person having been freed from it by the grace of the Almighty not tremble at the thought of it and earnest thanksgiving to his Maker for delivering him from a curse which contains innumerable misfortunes of this world and the next? Says a Tradition of the Prophet: "There are three things and if they are present in any one he will taste (the joys of) faith: firstly, that God and the Prophet be dearer to him than anything else, secondly, that his love for any one (or anything) is only for the sake of God, and, thirdly, that he dreads returning to the state of Paganism like being thrown into the fire". (—Bukhari) Says God in denunciation of Paganism, its rites, its customs, its practices and its heroes.

And We made them patterns that invite unto the fire, and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped.

And We made a curse to follow them in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be among the hateful. (27: 41, 42)

Unto Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they did follow the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Paraoh was no guide. He will go before his people on the Day of Resurrection and will lead them to the fire for watering-place. And hapless is the watering-place (whither they are) led. A curse is made to follow them in the world and on the Day of Resurrection. Hapless is the gift (that w'll be) given (them). (11: 99)

REVIVAL OF PAGANISH ERA IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

Due to being over-awed by the Western philosophy and its peculiar mode of approach to life many Muslims in Islamic countries have begun to recall the pre-Islamic period of their national existence with pride an pleasure. They are being drawn intellectually and emotionally to the customs and practices of that period as a part of their national heritage. They want to resuscitate them and to give a place of honour and privilege to the kings, leaders and other noteworthy personalities of that period in their history as if it was a golden age which Islam snatched away from them. God bless our souls! What a colossal ingratitude and lack of appreciation of the worth and value of Islam and the Prophet it is ! It would mean that all dislike for Paganism and idolatry and the contempt for their senseless practices has disappeared from the hearts—and these are things which

are hard to imagine with respect to conscientious Muslims. It will be no wonder if because of these follies the Muslims may totally be deprived of faith, the blessing of Islam may be withdrawn from them and some heavenly curse is sent down in place of felicity. The Quran has warned:

And incline not towards those who do wrong lest the fire touch you, and ye have no protecting friends against Allah, and afterward ye would not be helped.

(11 : 113)

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CHAOS

Besides Nationalism, another calamity that is bringing ruin upon the Islamic World is the blind admiration for the material things of life by its upper classes. They are ready to sacrifice all other considerations and values in the pursuit of their worldly ambitions. There is at work among them a strong tendency to prefer this material world to the Hereafter and to avail themselves wholeheartedly of its pleasures. The appeasement of the sensual appetites has become the chief object of their existence with the result that moral perversion, drink, debauchery and the other vices have freely crept into them and they have obtained, more or less, a complete freedom from the moral obligations imposed by religion as if they have no connection with it or that the Islamic Shariat has been repealed. With a few exceptions the ruling sections of Muslims, present a picture very much like it everywhere.

THE BIGGEST DANGER

This, in brief, is the moral and spiritual state of the present day Muslims. A wave of Paganism is sweeping across the Muslim World and carrying away with it the glorious heritage of Islam. Never has Islam experienced a danger so powerful and so all-prevading. And the tragedy is that there are few who are willing to take stock of this dismal situation and fewer still to place all that they have at stake to combat it. We remember that when agnostic tendencies raised their head in Islam under the influence of Greek philosophy there sprang up a number of outstanding men to put them down with all the unique resources of their mind and heart and with their social prestige. Similarly, when the sects of *Batiniyat* and *Mulahida* made their appearance, the crusaders of Islam jumped into the arena to take issue against them with pen and speech. Thus Islam on account of these timely services continued to command such a strong position intellectually and logically that it could beat off any storm that arose.

THE REAL PROBLEM

The real problem before Islam now is not that of moral degeneration or slackness in matters of prayer or other supererogatory observances or the disregard of the religious practices or the imitation of the foreigners. These are important things, no doubt, but the real issue in front of it which has worked itself up like a mighty tidal wave and is striking directly at its roots is one of belief and unbelief. It is that whether Islam will survive

in the world or be cast away like an old garment. The battle that is being fought today in the Muslim World is between Western materialism and Islam, the last of the messages from God. On one side there is agnosticism and on the other the Divine Law. I believe this is the last struggle between religion and irreligiousness after which the world will swing full-scale towards one side or the other.

THE HOLIEST OF HOLY WARS

The Jehad of today, the greatest need of the present hour, is to repulse this storm of atheism, nay, to go ahead and make a direct assault at the heart of it. The chief task of religious renovation in the modern times lies in the revival of faith among the youngmen and the educated classes of the Ummat in the basic tenets of Islam, in its moral and spiritual scheme of things and in the Apostleship of the Prophet. There can be no better deed of worship today than to release the educated youngmen of intellectual and psychological confusion and frustration they are going through and to satisfy them mentally with regard to Islam. The basic characteristics of Paganism that have dug themselves into their minds must be weeded out to make place for spiritual truths of Islam.

For a full century the West has been preying on the hearts and minds of the Muslims. It has played havoc with its skepticism, doubt and disbelief. The transcendental truths have been trampled underfoot by the materialistic concepts of political science and economics.

We have watched all this like a mere spectator, heedless of what it was leading to. We sat pretty on what our ancestors had left behind to us and did not realise that it was essential to bring it into conformity with the changing pattern of time. We also made no effort really to understand the thought-process the West had released. We never examined the Western philosophy and way of life critically. Our time was wasted in superficial discussions till now after the passage of a century the time has come before us when the foundations of the faith itself are in danger and a generation has come up which has very little real trust in the spiritual values of life.

CALL OF FAITH

The cyring need of the hour is to call the Muslims back to faith. The rallying cry of this new religious endeavour should be "Let us re-create faith in Islam." But mere slogan-raising will avail nothing. We have to think of the way through which to approach the inner selves of the ruling sections of the contemporary Muslim World so that they can be brought back to Islam.

SELFLESS PREACHERS

Today Islam needs workers who may be ready to dedicate their entire resources and abilities, their learning, their time, their money and their energy to its cause and pay not any heed to the attractions of worldly advancement. They must be wholly free from malice, bearing no grudge against anyone. They should serve,

but take no service from others, give and not take. Their conduct shall of course be different from that of political workers who are motivated mainly by the lust for power. Sincerity should be their habit, and freedom from every kind of self-seeking, vanity and prejudice their chief mark of distinction.

NEW INSTITUTIONS

Furthermore, we require such academies which may produce a literature forceful and inspiring enough to bring the educated youth back to Islam in its wider sense, emancipating them from the bondage of Western ideology which they have thoughtlessly accepted mainly under the stress of the times—a literature that may lay down the foundations of Islam anew in their minds and provide healthy, wholesome food for their souls. For this task there are needed devoted scholars in every nook and corner of the Muslim World who may not leave the intellectual front of the battle till the last shot is fired.

For my part, I want to state clearly that I have never been one of those who believe in the separation of religion from politics or who seek to interpret religion (Islam) in a way that it may fit into every pattern of life. Nor do I belong to that category of theologians who include politics among the 'condemned tribe of the Quran'. I am second to none in my desire to see the development of proper political consciousness and leadership among the Muslims everywhere. I believe that a theocratic society cannot be established without

the ascendancy of religion and the political structure being based on the precepts of Islam.

PAST EXPERIENCES

But the question is one of precedence, of first things first, and of the exigencies of time. So far our time and our energies have been directed towards political and agitational activities. This was due primarily to the assumption that the condition of the Ummat was sound so far as faith was concerned. The leadership was in the hands of the Muslims themselves and the ruling classes were alive to their responsibilities towards Islam and eager to bring about its victory in the world. But now the state of affairs is just the reverse of it. The Ummat has suffered a serious degeneration both morally and spiritually without being actually aware of it. Speaking in a general way, its educated and privileged sections have almost been weaned away from the faith by the Western ideas and they are, so to speak, openly in revolt against the basic ideology of Islam, thinking that what they have borrowed from the West represents the *sine qua non* of truth and progress and unless the society is reorganised in the light of the material concepts there can be no hope for the future. They are pushing forward the Western way of life with all the enthusiasm of new converts and bringing the whole of the Muslim Ummat very close to atheism. It is a different matter that some of them want to hurry through the process while others believe in a more graduated course. The modes of their approach are also different. But so far as the destination is concerned it is the same with all of them.

TWO DIVERGENT GROUPS AMONG THE THEOLOGIANS

With regard to this section, our theological class—if the term be correct for there is no clerical or priestly class in Islam—is divided into two divergent groups. One of them is emphatically opposed to it and does not want to have any truck with those who belong to it, but it is also completely unconcerned with the question as to what causes and factors are responsible for producing the atheistic tendencies among the privileged Muslim classes. It abhors to have any contacts with them and does little by way of purging them of their erroneous beliefs. The other group associates with them to the full and seeks advantages in terms of worldly gain as a result of its association. It pays no attention to their spiritual redemption. Hence this group has no call to give or religious pride to display. It seems to have abandoned those sections to their fate and has no solicitude for correction and reformation.

THE GROUP THAT REALLY IS NEEDED

There is unfortunately no group among the religious leaders which may devote itself to the reform ation of the Muslim upper classes thinking that they are merely the victims of a disease from which recovery is not impossible—a group which may carry the message of religious reclamation to them with tolerance and wisdom and discharge among them the obligation of selfless service. Due to this handicap the Westernised ruling section of our society gets no opportunity to come

to religion and to the religious atmosphere. The result is that this section spends its life in ignorance and distrust of faith and the distrust is further strengthened by the conduct of that group among the ecclesiastics which comes forward as its rival in the political field or fights against it for political power with religion as the major instrument of its action. Such religious leaders help only to make it more suspicious of religion for it is natural for man to dislike those who compete with him or a thing which he holds dear may it be belonging to the realm of wealth or of power and prestige or of pleasure and self-indulgence.

The cure of the ills of the Muslim World lies in our capacity to produce a band of dedicated workers who may be above all personal considerations and have no worldly aspirations for themselves. Their entire endeavour should be directed towards loosening the intellectual and psychological knots of the ruling classes of the society through establishing personal contacts with them and bringing forth for them an effective religious literature and through their own piety, sanctity of character, earnestness of purpose, sincerity and self-less and Prophet-like moral conduct.

VERDICT OF HISTORY

History records that it is men of this class and calibre who have rendered genuine service to Islam during all the phases of its career. The credit for changing the course of the Ummayyad rule and bringing Omar bin Abdul Aziz on the throne of the Caliphate belong to

this very class of men functioning under the inspired leadership of Rija bin Hayat. In India too the revolution of an identical nature that was wrought during the time of the Mughals owed its origin to a similar band of devoted servants of the Ummat. A powerful Emperor like Akbar had resolved, so it did seem to all intent and purpose, to cast the sub-continent in the mould of Paganism in opposition to Islam after it had remained for four hundred years under the benign shadow of Muslim rule. But by virtue of determined action by an inspired man of faith and endeavour and his illustrious successors the land was won back for Islam—and more firmly than before. Each successor of Akbar proved to be better than his predecessor till there came Aurangzeb on the throne whose reign constitutes a most glorious chapter in the annals of Islam and religious renovation. History, as you know, is always ready to repeat itself—it never tires of the process—the only thing is that there may be some force strong enough to turn its tide and the only force which can bring back the golden era of Islam is the earnestness, the sagacity and the missionary zeal we have just spoken of.

THE CURRENT CRISIS

We should face the current crisis with wisdom courage and fortitude. A woeful tragedy of moral, cultural and intellectual Apostasy has struck Islam. It should be the object of serious concern to all those who have any solicitude for Islam. Today the leading sections of Muslim society almost everywhere are on the verge of the dissolution of faith. They have already discarded, in the main, the moral obligations imposed

by the Shariat, their mental outlook has become wholly materialistic and in politics they are pursuing enthusiastically what must be described as the course of irreligion. There are many among them—to avoid saying a majority of them—who do not belive in Islam as a creed and an ideology. And the Muslim masses although they possess all the seeds of goodness and virtue and constitute innately the most virtuous segments of humanity, are under the influence and overlordship of these sections due to their educational and economic backwardness. If the present situation continues as it is the Apostasy will infiltrate into the masses as well and destroy the faith of the simple minded Muslim peasants and artisans. It has been so in the West and it is going to happen here also in the East if the events are allowd to take their course and the All-Powerful Will of the Providence does not intervene.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

There is not a day to be wasted. The World of Islam is threatened with a most dangerous wave of Apostasy—a wave that has spread over the most effective sections of it. This wave is a revolt against the moral and social values that are the most precious treasures of Islam. If these treasures are lost, which are a sacred heritage from the Prophet handed down from generation to generation and for whose protection the soldiers of Islam have borne enormous hardships and gone through the severest of trials, the World of Islam will also be there no more.

Shall we awake to this great reality, to this mighty threat of the times? Or shall we not?

ISLAM IN A CHANGING WORLD

A seminar on ISLAM IN A CHANGING WORLD was held in January 1977 under the auspices of Aligarh Muslim University's Department of Islamic Studies in which, apart from scholars from all over the country, the Heads of the four leading Muslim institutions, also, participated. They were: Prof. A. M. Khusro, Vice-Chancellor, Muslim University, Aligarh, Maulana Qaari Mohammad Tayyab, Mohtamim, Darul Uloom Deoband, Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Naazim, Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow, and Dr. Masud Hussain Khan, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia, Delhi.

The inaugural address at the seminar was delivered by Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi on January 22, 1977.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, members of the teaching staff of the University and distinguished visitors,

I am grateful to the organisers of the Seminar for according to me the honour of inaugurating it. It is in the fitness of things that this Seminar is being held under the auspices of Muslim University, Aligarh which has taken a bold and candid notice of the changing world with special reference to Islam and Muslims in India. The movements and institutions which recognise the reality of change take a solemn responsibility on themselves. It is not easy to acknowledge the need of alteration and modification because after it, it becomes essential to keep a constant eye on the changes that take place around us, to examine and evaluate them objectively and to ask ourselves whether we are really prepared to accept their challenge and adjust ourselves to them.

The scholars of the Muslim University and Nadwatul Ulema have, thus, taken an important duty upon themselves and, incidentally, a confluence of those who exercise power in the two institutions is being witnessed here today. They should analyse themselves before analysing the times and decide if they are ready again to accept a legitimate change after having once under gone a transformation.

CHANGE IS THE LAW OF LIFE

The subject of discussion, today, is ISLAM IN A CHANGING WORLD. It consists of two parts, ISLAM and the CHANGING WORLD, and I would like to take the opportunity to present my views clearly on both the aspects of the problem so that we can bestow some thought on it in a free and frank manner.

So far as the changeableness of time, or, in the words of Iqbal, its fondness for the new is concerned, it is a case of being more sinned against than sinning. It is generally, supposed that there is no constancy or permanence in time; it is simply another name for change and alteration. But it is not so. Time is the combination of both, change and permanence.

Whenever this state of equilibrium will be disturbed *i.e.*, permanence will come to over-rule change or change will exercise an upperhand over permanence, it will have a serious repercussion on the society and the civilisation. There is even a greater need for proportion in it than in a chemical compound.

Time possesses the ability to change and it should change. It is not a sign of weakness or imperfection but the law of life. As Iqbal has said: "Life is ever-moving, ever-flowing, ever-young." A life which is devoid of the capability for growth and development is anything but life.

Together with it, resistance to change, also, is an inherent quality of time. The manifestations of change are plainly visible to us and we, all, feel how greatly the times have altered. But, in the ordinary course of things, we fail to appreciate the struggle time puts up in order to preserve its good and healthy attributes, its real nature and character. For it, a special kind of microscope is required. Take the river which offers an ideal example of movement. No two waves of it are altogether alike. Yet, in spite of its passing waves, the

river has been there for thousands of years with all its characteristics, its name, its direction and its channel. Tigris and Euphrates, Ganga and Jamuna are still what they were in the ancient times.

Time is stationary as well as moving. Both of these qualities are essential for it. Without any of them, it cannot maintain its usefulness. In the same way, negative and positive forces are always at work in all the living and non-living objects existing in the world. By their action and reaction, these objects are fulfilling their destiny.

RELIGION IS THE GUARDIAN OF LIFE

As a follower and student of Religion, I can never accept the position for it that it responded to every change. Nor will you agree to it. It is not a thermometer whose function merely is to record the temperature. It is not a weather cock which tells which way the wind is blowing. Religion cannot be defined in those terms. It cannot be reduced to a mechanical contraption. None of us would like it simply to operate as the recorder of the changes of the times. - What to speak of a revealed faith, even a so-called religion will not tolerate that position.

Religion recognises change as a reality and affords the fullest scope for the freeplay of things that are needed for a healthy and wholesome alteration. Religion marches hand in hand with life and it does not merely follow it. Its duty, also, is to discriminate and distin-

guish between a healthy and an unhealthy or a correct and an incorrect change, between a constructive and a destructive trend. It has to determine whether an alteration is beneficial or harmful for mankind, or, at least, for its followers. While, on the one hand, it keeps abreast of the dynamic life, on the other, it, also, acts as its guardian and custodian. It has to discharge the duty of superintendence and control as well. It is not the job of a guardian to support whatever his ward does, to uphold all his good and bad inclinations and to set his seal of approval on everything he chooses pursue. Religion does not possess only one seal, only one ink and only one hand. It is not for it to fix its stamp on any document or deed. It must discriminate and pick and choose. It will, first, examine it, and, then, pronounce its verdict. If a thing is wrong or harmful, religion will try to put it down gently if possible, and forcibly if necessary. If a document is brought before it which it considers to be injurious for mankind, it will not only refuse to set its seal on it but, also, strive to resist it. Herein lies the difference between ethics and religion. Religion regards it a duty and responsibility to check a wrong trend while ethics contents itself with indicating it.

SOME TRIALS IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGION

In the history of religion we find some periods during which it appeared that it had lost contact with life. But the fault lay not with it but its followers. It is not the religion that fails to keep pace with life but, due to their lethargy and indifference, its adherents do not bring

into practice its high ideals and lofty values. The followers are left lagging behind while the caravan of life moves on. But the difference between Religion and its followers is so subtle that, generally, it is overlooked and we do not bother to enquire which of the two really is to blame. We are apt to couple them together. But if a critical and unbiased study is made it will seem that Islam as a Divine Faith was not responsible for this sorry state of affairs. There is nothing in it that may prevent it from answering the needs of the practical world and solving its problems.

It is a common weakness with us to throw the blame on others. When the Muslims fail to find the answer to their problems in the light of the Quran and to work out a synthesis between the eternal laws of faith and the changing realities of the world, they begin to find fault with the Quran and not with themselves or give the impression to the critics that it is the Quran that is defective and imperfect for it does not provide a justification for every whim, desire or need of theirs. In the words of Iqbal:

> The creed of these slaves is that defective is the Book,
> For it teaches not the Muslims the ways of servility.

Some people even go a step ahead and seek to subordinate the Quran to their waywardness, inclinations and ambitions and offer such interpretations of it that may lend justification to their perverted ideas and actions. Instead of casting themselves in the mould of

the Quran they strive to cast the Quran into the mould of their thinking and doing.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has shed light on this failing, in his inimitable style, in his commentary of the Quran. He writes: "When they felt that they could not go along with the lofty heights of the Quran they tried to bring it down from them so that it could go along with their lowness."

DEARTH OF MEN OF ABILITY

The periods of stagnation in the circles of Faith or of confusion, complexity and inner conflict among its followers are, in fact, the periods of the dearth of men of worth and ability who could accept the challenge of the times and serve as forceful representatives of Religion. Whenever, in the annals of Islam, Faith has received an effective representation, the Islamic Society and the Shariat have never been confronted with a crisis of confidence. Throughout the long and chequered history of Islam we come across with outstanding men who rose above the common level and put an end to the mischief of the day. They found solutions to the new problems and discharged sucessfully the responsibility of representing faith and standing and speaking for it. Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Maalik, Imam Shafiee and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal were born at a time when Islam and the world needed them. By presenting the Islamic Canonic Law in a clear and definite form they solved the problems created by the expansion in the dominions of Islam. Later, there appeared leaders of thought and

action like Imam Abul Hasan Ashari and Imam Ghazali who grappled with the challenges thrown up by their times and found appropriate solutions to them.

EASY AS WELL AS INTRICATE

The question is quite simple but it can become most complicated if it is examined wholly from the angle of philosophy and logical reasoning. It is easy as well as intricate, simple as well as complex. It is easy and simple if you, at first, understand the reality of time, that it is not changing in the way that neither a system of ethics nor a school of thought can keep pace with it. He should try to grasp the significance of time and to give it its proper place, and, at the same time, understand Islam and undertake a study of it in depth and see what eternal guidance has been furnished in the Quran, how does it appreciate the changing character of life and gives the call to reflect and ponder. We should study and examine how successfully the Muslims of the early phase who had to face new ideologies and civilisations for the first time fulfilled their duty.

To keep abreast of the Modern Age is nothing to be very proud of so far as Islam is concerned. It can, in truth, guide it and bring it to the right path.

BENT UPON SUICIDE

In what an abyss of destruction the Modern Age is falling? How is it bent upon self-destruction and driving mankind to death? It is producing heaps of

evidence against the utility of the human race in the Court of the Almighty and showing that man has no right to live. What destructive forces are at work in it? Through its teachings that are preserved in the Quran—social as well as moral and appertaining both to individual and collective existence—Islam cannot only fulfil the legitimate demands of the present times but also have the modern civilisation from ruin and annihilation. The question no longer is of keeping pace with the Modern Age. It is now the question of saving it. What is going to be the fate of those who swear by the Modern Age, who sing its praises and hold seminars in its name? Where are they going to end up? Will their voice be heard in the wide world where only the stomach and the carnal appetites are worshipped. Today, in the world and in our own country only two realities are recognised: Power and Wealth. Will we be able to bestow serious thought on anything in such an environment? Will people be in a mood to listen? Only one slogan will be heard here: Make hay while the sun shines. Moral obligations, ethical values and spiritual ideals will cease to have any meaning. The talk of saving humanity will be dubbed as nonsense. No one will be ready to lend ear to it.

The problem of saving the Modern World now is more important than that of saving Islam. Take care of the current Age which has become so inebriated that it is not prepared to listen to anything that is sober or earnest. Do not worry about Islam. It takes notice of every age and recognises all just and lawful demands. No system is more fair and quitable than Islam. It has

been deeply concerned with every cry of anguish. It has always appealed to the intellect and urged it to remain active and operating. There is a holiday for the Muslim University and the Arabic Madrassas. It may be on a Sunday or a Friday. But there is no holiday for the human intellect. Islam thought that men of learning should be more self-sacrificing than anyone else and be ready to maintain the severest and austerest standards of living.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Many misunderstandings are caused by misinterpretation. Hazrat Ali has advised us to talk to people according to their level of understanding. Present transcendental truths in such a way that the mind may accept them. It is not merely a question of language but of mode of thinking and mode of expression as well. He, then, adds, "Do you want the teachings of God and His apostle to be confuted?" God and the Apostle are being confuted not because their precepts are against the realities of the times but because these are not being presented in an attractive and easy to-understand manner.

Islam commands its own place in the changing world. It will forfeit the claim to it if it makes an appeal for mercy. The world, on the other hand, can advance in the right direction under its guidance.

RELIGION AND CIVILIZATION

Our attention, at this stage, turns towards Civilisation. It is a Western notion. Many people imagine that Islam is the name of a Civilisation that is no more. The writers are fond of alluding to it as the Legacy of Islam. Islam does possess a civilisation but it does, definitely, not stand for an old and archaic civilisation. We know that a thousand or five hundred years old civilisation has no validity in a changing world. But religion is not merely the name of some moral values, social or cultural system or school of architecture. It is a question of transcendental truths, articles of faith and essential doctrines of belief, of mutual relationship between the Deity and the bondmen and of the eternal laws of existence.

If such is the scope of Islam, it is absurd to ask what will happen to it when the moulds will change. Will it be able to fit into them? Western intellectuals raise wrong issues and promote misleading controversies. However much life may change, there will always remain a place for the transcendental truths. The whole of existence must come under the superintendence of faith otherwise we will fall a prey to the same evils that are rampant in the modern Western society.

CLOSING SPEECH

Gentlemen,

It is most gratifying to me that the scholars of Modern educational institutions have begun to take interest in Islamic sciences. The present Seminar is a proof of it. Now as the servants of these sciences we can say with Iqbal:

> Gone are the days when I was alone in the assembly;
> Now many are the sharers of my secret here.

The treasures of the mind have never been the monopoly of any class. It should not be so. As far as Islam is concerned, you know that there is no hereditary priestly class in it. The concepts of priesthood and the ecclesiastics are peculiar to the Christian World. These are foreign to the World of Islam. If such terms are found in the writings of some of our scholars it is solely due to the blind imitation of the West. Nowadays the term *Rijaluddin* has become quite popular with Arab writers. It is being used in the same sense in which Priesthood is used in the Christian World. Careful and prudent writers who aim at a correct presentation of Islamic thought and spirit have scrupulously avoided terms like these. While expressing pleasure at the growing interest of contemporary seats of learning in Islamic sciences I will, however, add that though there is no place for the clergy and Priesthood in Islam, we have always had our experts and specialists. It is inevitable, for such a phenomenal expansion has taken place in the various branches of learning that it is no longer possible for anyone to be a master of everything

In Europe, too, the process of advancement began when people started to devote themselves to special branches of studies and its scholars stopped being an authority on the entire range of knowledge. I suppose this principle is even now followed more in the West than in the East. There experts in any line unhesitatingly confess about a profession or field of study other than their own that it is not their domain. We should, also, now resolve to limit our literary or intelectual endeavours to a particular subject or branch of study.

STANDARD OF PERFECTION

I am proud to be a fellow-traveller. Taking advantage of it, I will make bold to offer a few suggestions. You will, perhaps, agree, that the standard of scholarship is going down in our midst. I had a similar feeling in the West as well and some scholars there, also, told me that a deterioration hat set in the study of Oriental sciences. The current generation of scholars is lacking in industry and application. It is due to various reasons, some of which are political, some economic.

SECRET BEHIND THE GROWTH OF ORIENTALISM

There are some impulsions behind every branch of learning. These factors had once taken Orientalism to the top. With the exception of a few physical and social sciences, Oriental studies were held in the greatest honour in the West and the Orientalists and their writings used to enjoy outstanding importance. At the back of it, a powerful factor was at work, that of Imperialism. We are glad that it is no longer operative.

Fortunately or otherwise, the richest lands of the East were under the domination of the Muslims and the West was casting a covetous glance at them.

Western Imperialism wanted to establish new colonies. It was, therefore, necessary for it to study the national characteristics of these countries. The Orientalists served as the vanguard of the Western Imperialists. They received official patronage, vast funds were placed at their disposal and they were received with honour in the courts of Kings and Heads of States. This factor has now ceased to exist. The other motive was of economic gain which, too, has lost its effectiveness. The economic structure has undergone such a transformation that the pursuit of Oriental studies is, today, not as rewarding financially as it used to be.

DEDICATION

The spirit of dedication, also, is not the strong point of the scholars of our time. The love for learning has weakened and with it the capacity for hard work, too, has diminished. I am not singling out any college or university. It is my general observation. Almost everywhere it is being felt that the single-minded devotion which distinguished the scholars of the past is not to be found these days.

We can obtain an idea from Nawab Sadr Yar Jung Maulana Habibur Rahman Sherwani's *Ulema-i-Salf*, which he wrote here in Aligarh, how passionately devoted to study and research the scholars of those days were, and what a marked deterioration has taken

place in it now. Why? Its causes are related to politics, economics, literature and ethics alike. It is neither possible nor necessary to discuss them here. This much, however, is evident that love for learning that may transcend everything, and make one indifferent even to such needs as food and dress is now rare, if not extinct. Take the case of Maulana Lutfullah of Aligarh. How overwhelming was his interest in his work? But leave him alone. Among the European scholars, there was Lane whose Arabic Lexicon is regarded as indispensable not only by the English-knowing students of Arabic but also by the Arab scholars. I have heard that when he was working on the Lexicon in Cairo, he did not leave his apartments for months. He had no idea of where the market place was, nor did he ever care to go and see the Pyramids. You can call it dullness or want of good taste if you like. But if you examine the history of the masterpieces of art and learning you will find that their creators or writers lived in a world of their own. Their work was their passion. They had no time or inclination for anything else.

LITERARY FIGURES OF THE RECENT DAYS

I am speaking to those who have made reading and writing their profession. When Maulana Shibli decided to write on the Library of Alexandria, the Muslim students in the Universities were made the target of the jeering remark that "Ah Yes! You belong to the religion and the community whose Caliph had burnt down the Library of Alexandria." It was on everybody's tongue.

People who had seen those days are still alive. They say that they did not know where to hide their faces or what answer to give. The current story was that when Hazrat Omar was informed that there was a library in Alexandria which was full of philosophical works, he replied that if those books were conforming to the Quran they were redundant and if they were opposed to it, they should be burnt. It was, thereupon, decided that the books were contary to the Quran and the whole library was burnt down without even opening the books. It is pure fabrication but even a historian like Toynbee has taken a hand in keeping it in circulation. Commenting on the change in the alphabet introduced in Turkey by Ataturk, Toynbee remarks that in the present times the burning down of the library of Alexandria would not have been necessary. Only the change in the alphabet was enough. Allama Shibli exploded the myth forever and now it does not befit an educated person to say that the Library of Alexandria was set on fire on Hazrat Omar's orders during his Caliphate. He has furnished irrefutable evidence to show that the library had been destroyed by fire much before the Caliphate of Hazrat Omar. Similarly, Allama Shibli took up the question of *Fazia* and discussed it so thoroughly that nothing was left for the future scholar to add. His *Sher-ul-Ajam* is regarded as a remarkable piece of study and research even in Iran. Prof. Brown says in his *Literary History of Persia* that if he desired to learn Urdu it was only to enable him to study *Sher-ul-Ajam* directly. It was all due to the total engrossment of scholars like Allama Shibli in learning.

Allama Sulaiman Nadwi whose main subjects were the Quran, the biography of the Prophet and the history of Islam wrote such a book on Omar Khayyam that it won the admiration of the literary circles of Iran as well. In the same way, his *Arab-o-Hina Ke Talluqat* is a monument of industry and research.

I, will, here, also mention *Nuzhat-ul-Khawatir* written by my father, Maulana Abdul Hai. It is in Arabic and runs into eight volumes and deals with over 4,500 men of eminence of India. He decided to compile it at the beginning of the 20th Century when there were few facilities in our country for learning Arabic or writing in it. It took him about 25 years to camplete it and, now, it is considered even in Europe, to be the most precious source book of its kind. Again, his *As-Saqafatil Islamia Fil Hind* contains a complete history of the Arabic sciences and syllabi in India and a detailed description of books and manuscripts left behind by Indian scholars. It was published is 1957 by the Royal Academy of Arts and Letters of Damascus and I have personally heard the Syrian scholars speaking highly of it.

LEARNING IS ITS OWN REWARD

In the bygone days an individual used to accomplish the work of whole academies. Now, big societies and institutions have been established but their output is, on the whole, not very encouraging. They are doing little original work.

What is needed is to raise the standard of scholarship. Learning is toil as well as fruit, thirst as well as water, hunger as well as food.

One should be so deeply devoted to his work that he regarded it its own reward and not the chairmanship of this department in a university or that.

The present-day scholars are in a hurry to collect the harvest. Their main concern is fame, promotion in service and increment in remuneration. A large part of their energy is spent in the pursuit of these objectives. Material gains is the main thing. You would have heard of many isms. A new ism is becoming popular in our educational institutions. It is careerism.

THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE SHOULD NOT BE A PASSING PHASE

Another thing is that interest in literary activities should not be short-lived. It should not be that a subject was chosen for a seminar and we chewed it hurriedly and then threw it out like a cudding animal. There was neither a commitment to the theme nor an enduring attachment to it. Once the seminar was over, we washed our hands of the whole thing. Says Iqbal:

The goal of Art is the flame of immortal life,
Not a spasm or two that vanish like sparks.

You may, of course, read papers on the need for *Ijtehad* (i.e. Exertion) in Islamic sciences. We all agree to it. It is a different matter why its door was shut, what were its reasons and how far was it correct. But I shall point out that so far as Islamic sciences are concerned, some of its origins are embedded in faith. It is their main spring-head. Our attitude towards them should, therefore, be different from the Orientalists. It should not be purely academical, that we merely discussed them without any sense of commitment. We should, also, believe in them if they are related to articles of faith, and, to an extent, cultivate them in our practical life. In my childhood, I had heard that ten maunds of wisdom were needed for a maund of knowledge otherwise one could not derive a real benefit from learning, nor use it properly. I will make an improvement on it and say that piety should also be there in some proportion with research because it is a question of Islamic sciences which are related to faith. We cannot subject it to a post-mortem examination like a dead body. It will not be fair. Criticism should be free from scorn, bitterness and ridicule.

Those who are conscious of the responsibilities of study and research and of the changeability of ideas and notions never present their views and verdicts in a dogmatic or authoritative manner. They do not expound a theory as if it was the last word in the line. Their position should be that they have arrived at such a conclusion which at that moment seemed to be correct.

At yesterday's session, Mr. Badruddin Tayyabji who was presiding over it had told a speaker whose time was up not that his time was over but that he was afraid that it was so. We can learn a lot from it. We must exercise restraint in our thought and learn to show respect to learning as well as to the person who devoted his time and energy to it.

IMPORTANCE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE

The importance of the Arabic language is fundamental. You cannot do any work on any Islamic science without acquiring proficiency in it. Non-Arabic knowing scholars are prone to committing shocking errors while writing on the Quran, the Traditions or Islamic studies owing to the lack of knowledge of Arabic.

A friend told me that once a gentleman who had translated the Quran into English was speaking at a seminar in Delhi. The well-known Arab scholar Ayesha bin Shaati, also, happened to be present. She requested him to speak in the Arabic upon which he unashamedly said that he did not know that language. "How, then, can you translate the Quran?" asked Ayesha in wonder. On returning, she wrote a series of articles in *Al-Ahram* of Cairo on that strange experience of hers and remarked, "I saw something of the wonders of the world and it was that a Gentleman had translated the Quran and he was ignorant of the Arabic language."

You can easily obtain a working knowledge of the Arabic language and, thus, save yourselves from such

errors. The Arabic madrassas will extend their fullest co-operation to you.

AVOID GIVING RISE TO CONFUSION

Some people express their views in a hurry, and, then, after some time, they retract them. No doubt, they perform their duty but what about the persons who may have departed from the world in the state of having been led astray by them? It becomes a serious affair when these opinions appertain to belief and faith. We should, therefore, not be impatient in giving expression to our views particularly when they belong to the realm of faith. We should think over them again and again, scrutinize them, place them before the experts and wait for their judgement. It is only then that these should be published. It is the age of confusion and man is easygoing by nature. Modern civilisation, the rapid pace of scientific advancement and the ever-increasing rise in the standard of living are tending to make him more ease-loving and susceptible to confusion. We should, as such, refrain from saying things that may add to the mental turmoil of the people.

THE PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO ACQUIRE IT

The speech delivered by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi on receiving the Degree of D. Litt., (Honoris Causa) at the Seventh Convocation of the University of Kashmir held on October 29, 1981.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Pro-Chancellor,

Mr, Vice-Chancellor, Teachers

and Scholars of the University, and

distinguished guests!

Knowledge, I believe, is one and indivisible, and to separate it into parts, into ancient and modern, eastern and western, and ideological and practical is incorrect. As Iqbal has said:

> **Talk of modern and ancient is**
> **The sign of narrowness of vision.**

I regard knowledge a truth which is a gift of God and does not and should not belong to a particular race or community. I see unity even in its diversity. That unity is truth, the search for truth, the aptitude for it,

and the joy of its realisation. I am grateful to the Chancellor and other officials of the University that their choice for this high academic honour fell upon a person who is associated with the traditional system of education.

Whatever the branch of study, literature, philosophy or science, I do not conform to the view that he, alone, is a scholar and an intellectual who appears in its 'uniform', and whoever does not clothe himself with it is not worthy of recognition. The same, unfortunately is the case even with poetry and literature, and it has come to be taken for granted that any one who does not display his wares in the shop-window or show himself off in the trappings of a poet or writer has no place in the realm of letters. The world has not forgiven even born literatures who did not put on the 'uniform' or were not lucky enough to obtain one from the 'storehouse'. I believe in the university, vigour and freshness of learning that has always been favoured with Divine guidance. If earnestness is there and the urge is genuine, the grace of the Lord is never withheld. It is always reaching.

At this Convocation of the University of Kashmir, situated as it is in a beautiful valley of the heaven-kissing Himalayas, I am reminded of the incident that had taken place, 1400 years ago, in the arid land of Arabia, and on a mountain which was neither high nor verdant. The tremendous impact it made on history, and the imperishable effect it produced is, absolutely, unique in the annals of our race, and, significantly enough, it, too,

was related to the 'tablet' and the 'pen' upon which rested the entire structure of knowledge and civilization, and without which neither the magnificient seats of learning would have come into existence nor the huge libraries. I mean the Divine Revelation that was sent down to the Prophet Mohammad, (Peace and Blessings of the Lord be on him,) on or about February, 12,611 A.D., in the Cave of Hira, near Mecca. It said:

Read (O Mohammad)! In the Name of thy Lord who created—
Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood,
Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,—
He who taught (the use of the) Pen,—
Taught man that which he knew not.

Even in this initial instalment of the Revelation, this first shower of the Rain of Mercy, the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds did not put off the proclamation that the destiny of learning was bound up with pen. To be sure, it was in the solitude of Cave Hira where an Unlettered Apostle had gone to seek Message from Almighty God for the guidance and instruction of humanity and whose own state was that he could neither read nor write. Can the like or equal of it be found at any stage of history? And to imagine the sublimity of it. The Revelation is sent down, for the first time, to the Unlettered Prophet in an illiterate country where what to speak of educational institutions, even bare literacy was rare, and contact is established, after hundreds of years, between the sky and the earth, and it begins with *Read*. He who did not know how to

read or write is being commanded to *Read*. It signified that the community that was to be given to him would not be a mere student, but teacher of the world and bearer of knowledge. It would promote learning among mankind. The era that had been granted to him would not be an era of darkness and ignorance, but of progress and enlightenment.

It declared: *Read*! *In the Name of thy Lord who created—*. The great misfortune was that the bond between knowledge and the Creator had been broken, and, consequently, learning had lost the sense of purpose and direction, and gone out of the right way. The broken link was restored now when knowledge was glorified. Besides, the warning was, also, given that knowledge should start with the Name of God for it was a Divine gift and could make a steady and balanced progress only under His guidance. It was the most revolutionary and epoch-making call the world had ever heard. No one, indeed, could have conceived of it at that time, and in those circumstances. Had it been put to the thinkers and writers of the world to guess as to how would the Revelation that was going to be received begin and what would take precedence in it, I am sure, no one with an idea of the mental and cultural condition of the Arabs would have said that it would commence with *Read*.

The announcement that the voyage of knowledge should begin under the guidance of the Omniscient and All-knowing God was unprecedented. It marked a watershed in the world of learning. The journey was

long, hard and perilous. It was full of pitfalls. Caravans were robbed in broad daylight. A perfect guide was essential, and who could it be save The Supreme Being, The All-wise? It was not abstract knowledge that was aimed at. Not the knowledge that consisted of ornamenting with colours or playing with the dolls or was meant simply for entertainment or for fighting with one another or filling the belly. Not the knowledge that taught only the use of the tongue. But:

Read! In the Name of thy Lord who created—
Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood,
Read! Any thy Lord is Most Bountiful,—
He who taught (the use of the) Pen,—
Taught man that which he knew not.

The proclamation was clear, firm and positive. Read! Your Lord is Most Benevolent. How can He be unaware of your needs and weaknesses? *Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,—He who taught (the use of the) Pen.* What could have elevated the pen in power and dignity more than that? Who could have given greater glory and honour to it? Remember, it was the first Revelation of Cave Hira and in a town where, perhaps, there was no pen in any home. If you needed one, you would have had to go to a Warqah bin Naufel or someone who had received education in Persia.

It, further, unfolded the great reality that knowledge was infinite. It was without end. *He taught man that which he knew not.* What is science? What is techno-

logy? Man is going to the moon. We have conquered space, and pulled the ropes of the earth. Is it not a miracle?

Gentlemen!

I shall crave your indulgence, now, to offer a few suggestions as an ordinary wayfarer of the valley of learning.

The foremost task of the Universities is character-building. Their endeavour should be to produce men who, in the words of Iqbal, may not be willing to sell their conscience for "a handful of barley". Under the influence of modern ideologies and current order of things, it has been presumed that everyone carries a price. There is no one who cannot be bought in exchange for something or another.

The real success of a University lies in moulding the personality of its scholars in a way and giving such citizens to the society who do not put themselves up to auction nor can be lured away by a destructive ideology or misguided movement;—such worthy specimens of humanity as can say with Iqbal:

By Thy grace, I am not without honour,
No Toghral's or Sanjar's slave I am;
Though world-seeing is my nature,
I am no Jamshed's cup.

Secondly, our Universities ought to send forth men who may be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of truth,knowledge, reform and uplift, and derive the same satisfaction from going without food as people, generally do from eating and drinking to their heart's content. and to whom loss appears to be more worthwhile than gain.

The Universities should see to what extent they are being successful in producing men of real worth and merit. The greatness of a country does not depend on the number of the Universities it has. This criterion has, now, become out-dated. The real thing is how many of its citizens are endued with an awareness of their duties and obligations and can come forward to dedicate themselves to the attainment and promotion of knowledge, growth and development of moral virtues, and suppression of evils like corruption, greed, cruelty and injustice. How many of them are able to rise above personal considerations and lift the country to a higher cultural and spiritual level?

The fundamental aim and purpose of knowledge is to impart a new life and a new soul to the country and the nation. I shall read out to you a few verses from Iqbal which though not addressed directly to the poets or writers are applicable to all the branches of learning.

Valuable is the taste for Art, ye men of vision,
But vision that perceives not reality is futile-
The song of the poet or the minstrel's strain,

Worthless is the zephyr which makes the garden depressed.
The goal of Art is the flame of immortal life,
Not a spasm or two that vanish like sparks.

Before I conclude, let me say a few words to the fortunate brothers who have successfully completed their studies and obtained the degrees or are still under instruction here. I shall take reccurse to relating a parable which may sound more agreeable to the ears after the exhortation I have just inflicted upon you.

Once, some students were enjoying a ride in a boat. The time was pleasant, the air was cool, and the young men were in high spirits. With the simple-minded boatman, also, being there to serve as a target of fun and entertainment, who could make the student sit quietly? One of them asked the boatman, "Uncle! What subjects have you read?" "I have read nothing," the boatman replied. The young man sighed, and said "Oh! Have you not read science?" "I have not even heard its name," replied the boatman. "But you must be knowing Geometry and Algebra," said another young man. "These names also are altogether new for me" came the reply. It was now the turn of the third student to sharpen his wit. "You would have surely, studied History and Geography" he said. "Are these the names of men or towns?" asked the boatman in reply. At it, the boys burst into laughter, and enquired from the boatman what his age was. "Forty years or so" he said. 'You have wasted half of your life and learnt nothing,' remarked the young men

The poor boatman remained silent. Soon afterwards, a storm arose in the river and the boat began to be tossed on unruly waves. Disaster seemed imminent, and the students who had no experience of journey by water felt extremely nervous. They were seized with the fear of their lives. The boatman, then, asked the young men with feigned seriousness, what they had learnt. Failing to grasp the real intent of the boatman, the students began to give a long list of subjects that were taught in the colleges. When they had finished, the boatman said with a smile, "You have read all these things. But, tell me, have you, also, learnt swimming? If, God-forbidding, the boat over-turns, how will you reach the coast?" "Uncle!" the youngmen replied. "This is the one thing we do not know. We never thought of learning it." Upon it, the boatman laughed aloud and remarked. "I have wasted half of my life, but you have lost the whole of your lives. Your education is not going to help you in the storm. Only swimming can save you today, and you do not know it."

The so-called powerful and advanced countries of the present-day world are confronted with an identical situation. The boat of humanity is in grave peril, the tides are moving menacingly towards it, and the shore is far away. The worthy passengers of the boat know everything, but are wholly ignorant of the art of swimming or navigation. Or, in other words, all the intellectual and scientific achievements notwithstanding, the modern man does not know how to live like a civilised and God fearing human being. Iqbal has drawn pointed attention to the dismal state of affairs, the strange contra-

diction, which has set up the biggest question mark before the Twentieth-Century world and brought it at the cross-roads of destiny.

He says:

He who enchained the sunbeams could not
Unfurl the dawn on life's dark night;

He sought the orbits of the stars, but failed
To travel his own thought's world;

Entangled in the labyrinth of his learning.
He lost count of good and evil.

The art of leading a good, useful and dignified life consists, basically, of God-fearingness, humanitarianism, self-restraint and willingness to subordinate one's own advantage to the common good. Unselfish interest in the welfare of others, respect for mankind, the urge to protect the life, property and honour of fellow-men, preference for duties over rights, defence of the weak and the down-trodden and the strength to stand up against the oppressors, firmness in opposition to those who have nothing to be proud of save power and wealth and refusal to be over-awed by them, the courage to speak the truth at all times and in respect of one's own country, belief in an All-knowing and All-seeing Power, and anxiety of being recreated after death and called upon to render a full account of one's doings on the earth,—these are the essential conditions of a good and noble life, and the fundamental requirements of a healthy society, and a strong and honourable nation. To

arrange for training and instruction in these attributes and to create an environment that may be conducive to their development is the primary responsibility of educational institutions.

Occasions like the Convocation we have the honour to be attending today offer an excellent opportunity to look into ourselves and see how successful our educational institutions are in the realisation of these ends, and what is the worth and calibre, in that regard, of the scholars produced by them, and draw up plans for the future.

I thank you, once again, for the honour bestowed upon me, and the affection and trust you have been kind enough to express through it.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT HAD AMERICA BEEN BLESSED WITH ISLAM

This speech was delivered on June **6, 1977** *in the Hall of the Divinity College of Harvard University. The speaker was introduced to the audience by Mr. Mudassir Husain Siddiqui which included University teachers and scholars. A large number of students from different parts of the country also attended. The proceedings began with the recital of Sura-i-Wat-Teen by a Black American Muslim.*

Surely We created man of the best stature
Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.

—(XCV: 4-5)

Friends and Brothers,

Today I will begin my speech with the remark to which I have been guided by the verses of the Quran that have just been recited. These verses have shown me the path of speaking to you. I am going to begin with something that may startle you. The Western World which stretches from Europe to the Americas is

most fortunate, and yet it is most unfortunate. Such a big contradiction, in the same breath, may seem strange to you, but the vers es which have been read to you, too, would appear self -contradictory, though they convey a profound reality. The same is the case with the whole of the West which, for reasons to go into which will be unnecessary here, has been vested by God with the leadership of the world. I have discussed at length in my book, *Islam and the World*, how universal leadership came to pass into the hands of the West. So, as I have said, what is true of man is, also, true of this part of the world. It is, at once, lucky and unlucky. It would not have mattered much had it been its own affair. Nations have risen to great heights in the past, and, then, their decline has set in and they have fallen into the abyss of obscurity. There would have been no reason for us to pay a particular attention if it appertained to a mere country. But when that country is in the position of leadership and its influence is felt throughout the world, it assumes serious proportions.

America is fortunate because Nature has been most generous to it. The Lord has bestowed His gifts lavishly upon this country. Its people are resourceful and enterprising. They are full of enthusiasm for living They have been granted such a tenacity of purpose, resoluteness and pertinacity that they have made the country a paradise on earth. They have unravelled the mysteries of nature and harnessed its forces to their use. In the words of Iqbal, they have "enchained the rays of the sun", and "sought the orbits of the stars". They have turned the dust into gold. Now, in this land wealth

pours down from the skies and rivers of milk and honey flow. This is the result of the galvanic spirit, robust imagination and unflagging eagerness of the American people. The United States not only abounds in mineral resources, but has, also, the hands to exploit them. In this respect, it is exceedingly fortunate and the whole world is, as if it were, keenly desirous to prove it. Every one is a beggar at its door, eager to solicit its favours. By their ingenuity, sense of discipline and capacity for management, the people here have organised their life so well that the world at large is benefiting from it. In the material and economic fields they are supreme.

You can justly be envious of America and admire it as much as you like. I do not believe in partisanship whether religious, social or political. One must give praise where praise is due.

But, at the same time, this country is most unfortunate. I say it with a full sense of responsibility. Many of you may be shocked at it, but it is a fact.

HE WHO ENCHAINED THE SUNBEAMS

It has been a tragedy not only for America but the whole of mankind that it concerntrated entirely on material progress and made the physical world the sole sphere of its activity. It would have been a different story had it received correct guidance and the boon and blessing of true faith had reached it, and the Americans had, also, paid attention to morality with equal earnestness and enthusiasm and looked for the potents of God in *Anfus* i.e., within themselves, and not only in *Afaq*

i.e., the horizons. If the intellectual faculties of the Americans had not been directed altogether towards finding a clue to the mysteries of nature and they, also had cared to discover the secrets of the *self*—of the heart and the soul—, they would have realised that the world of heart was immeasurably more extensive than the world of matter, so much so that if the whole of the universe was dropped into the heart of man it would get lost like a pebble in an ocean. The people of America would then, have been able to appreciate correctly the place of man in the grand design of creation. Of the time and energy they have recklessly spent on material sciences, and, as we all know, with the results, we have it in the Quran:

> And that man hath only that for which he maketh effort,
> And that his effort will be seen,
> And afterward he will be repaid for it with fullest payment.
>
> —(LIII: 39-41)
>
> Each do We supply, both these and those, from the bounty of thy Lord;
> And the bounty of the Lord can never we walled up.
>
> —(XVII: 20)

Whatever field man chooses for himself, God will grant him success in it. There is no limit to it, no thus far and no further. The consequences of the enterprise and industry of the West are before us. The world has shrunk and man has subjugated it for his own ends and interests. Had the Westerners exerted themselves,

in the same way, on the heart, soul, and belief, the world would have known the true station of humanity. When the West worked on a tree, it produced from it a fruit no one could dream of. Identically, when it turned to Physics, Chemistry and Botany, it discovered new worlds. In the earlier days people were not inclined to believe in the plurality of the worlds and those who made such a claim were remorselessly punished by the Papal authority. But, today, a new world is being discovered in almost everything. In the same way, had the West known the true station of humanity and appreciated the distinction God had conferred upon man, the history of our race would have been different.

MOST APPROPRIATE RELIGION

Two events were largely responsible for the tragedy which overtook not only the West, but the whole of mankind. One was the arrival of Christianity in the Western Hemisphere. We, the Muslims, are, also, to blame and however much were we to regret it, it would not be unjustified. The fact is that the most appropriate religion for this part of the world would have been Islam which awakened the latent human capabilities, gave encouragement to intellect, and made man self-reliant and self-respecting. Says the Quran:

> Surely We created man of the best stature. —(XCV: 4)
> Verily We have honoured the children of Adam.
> We carry them on the land and the sea, and have made provision of good things for them, and have prefer-

red them over many of those whom We created with a marked preferment. —(XVII: 70)

Lo! I am about to place a viceory in the earth.
—(II: 30)

Islam places the crown of Vicegerency on man's head than which there can be no greater honour. The whole structure of Islam is based upon the doctrine of Divine Unity and when it declares that man is *Khaleelaf-ul-Laah* i.e., the Vicegerent of God on earth, it elevates him so much that one cannot think of a higher and nobler concept of humanity. Thus, in a Tradition, it is stated that on the Day of Judgement God will say to His bondsman "I fell ill and you did not visit Me." The bondsman will reply, "Thou art the Lord of the Worlds. How could I visit Thee?" God will, thereupon, say "Did you not know that such-and-such a bondsman of Mine was ill and you did not care to visit him? Had you gone to see him in order to comfort or help, you would have found Me with him." God, again, will say, 'O son of Adam! I asked you for food, but you did not give it to Me." The bondsman will reply, "Thou art the Lord of the Worlds. How could I give Thee food?" God will, then, say, "Are you not aware that such-and-such a bondsman of Mine begged you for food and you did not give it to him. Had you fed him you would have found it with Me." God, again, will say, "O son of Adam! I was naked, but you did not cover Me with a garment." The bondsman will reply, "Thou art the Lord of the Worlds. How could I clothe Thee?" God will, then, say, "Such-and-such

a bondsman of Mine begged you for something to wear and you did not give it to him. Had you done that the dress would have reached Me."

What greater honour can there be for mankind? Islam, further, tells that man is sinless by birth, his nature is pure, and his slate is clean. A Tradition has it that "every child is born on its nature i.e. pure and guiltless and it is its parents who make it a Jew, Christian or Fire-worshipper." They dye it in their own hue otherwise when a man is born he is on the *Colour of Allah*. Islam teaches that the innate characteristic, the fundamental reality of human nature is submission. There is no defect in it. It is basically sound. The Quran says: *It gets what it earns, and it sufers what it earns*. (II: 286). Which means that it is beneficial for man what he earns, and it is harmful for him what he earns with effort. The good deed a man does is in conformity with his nature while the wrong path he pursues is in defiance of it. The assertion that the good deeds of man are in response of his natural instincts whereas his misdeeds are, so to speak, a revolt against himself bears a most eloquent testimony to the inherent purity of human nature.

So, Islam was the most suitable religion for this land. Had a union taken place between the two, the history of mankind would have taken a different course. On the one side, there would have been the unbounded natural resources of America, the tremendous vitality, resoluteness and enterprise of its people—the will to forge ahead and to win new laurels, and, on the other,

the moderation of Islam, its message of hope and confidence, its incomparable quality of being the Faith of Nature and its insistence on the intrinsic innocence of man i.e., the doctrine that man is born free from sin and if he goes astray and falls into error, it is a passing phase and the rust that is formed on his heart as a result of it disappears as soon as he resolves to offer sincere repentance which is not a thing of constraint, but an inborn impulsion, and, that is why, a high place has been given to those who repent after sinning.

Islam gives encouragement to the creativeness of man and arouses his dormant capabilities. It is the faith of Monotheism, of the Oneness of God. There is no speculative philosophy or empty idealism in it. It is based on solid facts and is such a simple religion that anyone can easily understand it. It does not put fetters on life, nor place obstacles in the path of knowledge, but elevates learning to an act of worship. It calls on man to study and reflect.

> And in earth are portents for those whose faith is sure, and (also) in yourselves. Can ye then not see?
> —(LI: 20-21)

> (Who) reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say): Our Lord! Thou createdst not this in vain. —(III: 191).

> We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves. —(XLII: 53)

Islam does not imprison the mind. On the contrary, it demands of man to make the fullest use of his mental faculties.

> And those who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat (but listen attentively and cogitate).
>
> —(XXV: 73)

But, alas, the West opted out for a faith which upheld the doctrine of the Original Sin and gave rise to the worst kind of pessimism and frustration by hammering into man the belief that to sin was his destiny, and destiny was unalterable. Or, in other words, it was a hereditary trait with him, a congenital disease. It is a different matter that a man goes wrong and transgressses against a God-given law, but realises his mistake and makes amends for it. But if the idea is implanted in his mind that he is a born sinner, you can imagine to what abrnomal reactions will he fall a prey.

Thus, one misfortune of this country was that it chose a religion which did not raise the stature of humanity, but put the mark of disgrace on its forehead and persuaded it to believe that it needed a personality that could redeem it by offering an atonement for its misdeeds. To make the matters worse, the inclination for monasticism and renunciation of the world soon appeared in the West.

THE CHURCH PUT IMPEDIMENTS IN THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The other calamity was that when the Church was in the ascendant, the ecclesiastics blocked the path of knowledge and investigation. At a time Europe was waking up and breaking the chains, the Papal authority stood before it like a thick wall and started measuring everything with its own yardstick. The Church opposed when it was claimed that the earth was round. Bruno, whose only crime was that he taught the plurality of the worlds, was declared a heretic and burnt alive, and Galileo another scientist of no less worth, was punished till he died in prison for having held that the earth moved round the sun. The Inquisition was established which performed its duty with such savage alacrity that the number of persons tried and punished by it was, in no way, less than the casualities in the last war.

The two things combined to turn the face of Europe decidedly towards materialism. The enlightened sections among the Europeans developed a strong aversion to everything associated with the ecclesiastics. They began to exhibit a definite intolerance of every kind of spiritual control. The feelings of disgust and disdain were directed not against a particular reigion, but against the whole concept of religious belief and worship. In its haste, the West decided that no progress could be made until Religion was discouraged and the bonds of slavery to the Church were broken. Europe, thus, rose openly in revolt against the Church and set out on the

journey of materialism, the mournful consequences of which stare us in the face everywhere.

Gentlemen, it is a long and painful story. You all are educated people and you must have read about it. Besides, the University at which I am speaking today is universally recognised as a great seat of learning. I will, therefore, not go into the details.

WESTERN CIVILISATION HAS COMPLETED ITS ACTION

The Western Civilisation has reached the highest point of its development. No one knows the mysteries of the universe save God, nor can anyone say, positively, what lies in store for us tomorrow. But, as the case is at present, this Civilisation has brought forth the best fruits it was capable of bearing. Now, we are standing at the cross-roads of history. The Western Civilisation has almost completed its action, and America, which is a major centre of it, is swaying merrily in the swing of its attainments. It can proudly claim to have lifted every veil from the face of Nature and unfolded all its secrets—distances have been reduced and man is enjoying all the facilities he could think of.

Nevertheless, the heart of man is devoid of peace. His soul is unhappy. He has reached a stage where life seems meaningless. He is dazed and bewildered. What was needed at this juncture was that men were born in this very country who could pull it out of the morass of frustration and disillusionment, give it a new

message and breathe a new life into it. The life is moving at a pace that has left man breathless. The modern Civilisation is taking him at break-neck speed, he knows not where. Neither the reins are in his hands nor are his feet in the stirrups.

RAY OF HOPE

I do not believe in the philosophy of chance happenings. I feel that there is the Hand of God behind everything that takes place. *That is the Measuring of the Mighty, the Wise.* (XXXVI: 37). You have come to live here in large numbers. There are not merely manual workers among you, but some highly gifted Muslims as well who are studying in the universities and engaged in valuable scientific investigation. Many of you have made your mark as scholars and researchists. What is more, Islam is spreading in America. It has made a dent. A number of Americans have either embraced Islam or are ready to do so. Our Black Muslim brethren are a source of strength to us. This country, in brief, seems to be taking a new turn and a new ray of hope is appearing. Due to our shortsightedness and internal dissensions we, in the past, lost the opportunity to come to its aid. Had Islam been propagated in Europe when the Ottomans had established their rule over a part of the Continent, or, even earlier, when the Moors had swept over Spain, the West, today, would not be finding itself in this predicament. It would not have been caught in the quagmire of materialism.

But, unfortunately, we did not rise to the occasion How much do I wish that the Muslim evangelists had reached here when they had set out into the world in the early centuries of Islam. It is said that the Muslims had discovered America before Columbus. How wonderful it would have been had they taken advantage of it and given the message of Islam to the New World. But it was not to be, and the Islamic countries have been paying the penalty for the last two hundred years. I believe that the way the Muslim countries have, today, become the lackeys of the West and the treatment they are receiving at its hands is a punishment for the failure of the Muslims to convey to it the Message of God at the proper time.

But now the circumstances are taking a favourable course. Muslims are migrating to America, in a steady stream, from different lands and for different reasons. There is no Islamic country whose finest young men are not found here. Lastly, a large number of enterprising people are coming to it from the country where the House of Ka'aba is situated. You should, now, realise your responsibility which does not lie merely in acquiring higher education or solving your economic problem. You are not here only to earn and take back the money to your native lands and provide for your families. You should know that it is your duty to give this country what it lacks. If you look at its material attainments and scientific advancement, it presents a true picture of the Divine pronouncement, *Surely We created man of the best stature*, but if you think over its moral bankruptcy and the agony of its soul, you will find it at the

level of *the lowest of the low.* Intellectual maturity and puerility exist side by side in America. On the one hand, the Americans are going to the moon, and, on the other, they are sinking into the lowest depths of moral degradation. The country that solved all the problems is finding itself helpless in providing a solution to the moral crisis of its youth. As Iqbal had said:

> He who enchained the sunbeams could not
> Unfurl the dawn on life's dark night.

I say it without hesitation that there is no Muslim country which can look the Westerners in the face and say: "See, it is here that you stumbled. With us is the panacea of your ills and the balm for your inner wounds. It is the Quran and the teachings of our Prophet." The bitter truth is that we have made ourselves unworthy of speaking to the West like men. We carry a heavy load of gratitude to it on our heads, and are immersed from head to foot in its favours. Our ignorance deposes against us. Our poverty shouts from the house-tops. Our arm is stretched out for alms. Such being the case, how can an Islamic country speak, like an equal, to the West which has the whip hand and enjoys every kind of superiority—intellectual, political and economic? Which Muslim country is there that can express the mildest criticism of the West or offer a suggestion?

YOU STATION IS OF MEN WHO INVITE TO GOODNESS

You may ascribe it to my imagination, but I will urge upon you to show them by your conduct and way of

life that you have something to give to the West. You are not here simply to take, but are, also, capable of giving. No matter whether you are a University teacher or a student or working in a firm, you can prove the authenticity of Islam to those with whom you live or associate. You can arouse in them the feeling that Islam can still give them something. In spite of possessing everything, they are paupers; they are insolvent from within. They are not deriving the advantage they should be from their material achievements. The real fruits of scientific and technological progress have been eluding them. You should have, first, faith in yourselves, in your station as the givers of the call to goodness. You are not mere gleaners to pick up the droppings. You can, also, fill their bowl with your own grain. It may sound preposterous in the present circumstances and many of my brothers and sisters may be wondering to what world do I belong.

But the Quran and the example of the Prophet fill me with faith and hope. The sacred Prophet had sent the following epistle to Caesar, who ruled over half of the then known world, when there was not enough to eat in his own house and the Muslim State had not been established in Medina.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Benevolent, the Most Merciful

From Mohammad, the bondsman and Messenger of Allah, to Heraclius, the Emperor of Rome.

Peace be upon him who follows the Guidance. I invite you to the message of Islam. Accept Islam and you shall be delivered: two-fold will be Allah's reward to you. But if you turn away then on you will rest the sin of (the denial of) your community. Oh People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement on a thing that is in common between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if you turn your back upon it then bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).

I am a follower of the Prophet who, with utmost self-reliance and trust in God, gave the call of Islam to the mightiest ruler of his time and in circumstances of utter poverty and powerlessness. When oven is not lighted in his house for months, when members of his household do not have a satisfactory meal even for two consecutive days, when his coffers are empty and his followers are few in number, he says to the Roman Emperor, "Accept Islam and you shall be delivered." We are the adherents of that Apostle. We must smnion up courage to give to these people what they need, to make them realise that we possess what they are, regrettably, wanting in, and without which the Western Civilisation is doomed. This Civilisation is ready to commit suicide. If anything can save it, it is the guidance of the Quran. A harmonious blending has *to* be worked out between material progress and spiritual values. Disaster awaits the world if materialism gains the upper hand over morality.

This is the call our Islamic countries should give. They should tell plainly to the West, "Look here. You aredrowning and we can save you." But is anyone of theme in that position? We have forfeited the right to do so. We are the hangers-on of the West. None of the Islamic countries has the courage to tell the West what ails its civilisation. They consider the Western Civilisation the last word in perfection. As someone has said, "The *Qibla* of the world is *Haram*, and the *Kibla* of *Haram* is America." I make bold to say that, today, the Islamic countries and the Muslim ruling classes are incapable of giving any call to the West. But you can perform the duty by displaying self-confidence, by presenting before them a solid example of the Islamic way of life, and by learning to be proud of your Faith. You should be grateful to the Lord for these favours. Through *Namaz*, supplication and freedom from servility to worldly ends and interests you should demonstrate to the world that materialism can never enslave your hearts and minds. You have not yet lost the ability to judge between good and evil. Worldly goods are not everything in your sight; not even this existence. Hereafter is an article of faith with you. You hold as true that there is to come another life and another world at the end of this mortal life. You believe that God is All-powerful, He has control over all things, and His good pleasure is the extreme limit of felicity and good fortune. God has given you the opportunity to acquaint the Americans with the realities that have receded into oblivion and Christianity has failed to revive them in spite of the vast resources at its disposal. You can

discharge that responsibility, all your faults and weaknesses notwithstanding.

Friends! I have taken a lot of your time. But you must make an allowance for the burning of my heart. Listen to the cry of anguish that rises from the depths of my soul. I can now attest before the Lord to have, given the *Azan* in the biggest idol-hall of the world and conveyed His Guidance to what can be the most appropriate place in the modern world. I shall deem myself successful if I have been able to evoke a sympathetic response in even one of my listeners here.

May Allah take from you, in an increasing degree, the service of His Faith and make you more useful to Islam and to this country than to yourselves, to your families, and to your native lands!